IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph starting on line 18, page 4, as follows:

According to a still further aspect of the present invention, there is provided a marking method comprising: a first step of irradiating a marking object by a pulse laser beam while at the same time changing the Numerical Aperture (NA) of an objective lens and an energy per pulse, thereby forming a characteristic-changed area by virtue of movement of a light converging spot; a second step of obtaining a relationship among the length of the characteristic-changed area, an NA and an energy per pulse; a third step of determining the length of a characteristic-changed area to be formed; a fourth step of determining an NA and an energy per pulse, in accordance with the relationship obtained in the second step, also in accordance with the length of a characteristic-changed area to be formed; and a fifth step of converging a laser beam on the marking object to form a characteristic-changed area therein, by using the determined NA and the determined energy per pulse.